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SUBJECT: FRANCE FULLY SUPPORTS U.S. POLICY ON BURMA

REF: STATE 121789

Classified By: Political Counselor Andrew Young, Reasons 1.4(b), (d).

¶1. (C) France fully supports current U.S. policy on Burma and wants to work closely with the U.S. to insure a coordinated approach, according to Ministry of Foreign Affairs Southeast Asia DAS-equivalent Charles-Henri Brosseau, who spoke to POLCOUNS on December 10, 2009. Brosseau noted that the French have been working closely with their British counterparts and that there is a growing consensus within the EU in support of a policy of dialogue with the GOB.

¶2. (C) The French and the EU want to encourage concrete gestures of good faith from the GOB, such as permission for the French and other resident EU Ambassadors in Rangoon to have regular access to Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) and the overall softening of the GOB's treatment of her. To promote such concessions, the EU is considering sending a high-level delegation to Burma. The Swedish Presidency of the EU may try to discuss such a mission with the Burmese delegation on the margins of the Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change.

¶3. (C) Brosseau acknowledged the importance of pressing the GOB to allow ASSK to meet with the National League for Democracy (NLD) leadership independent of government interference. He referenced his recent trip to Burma where he witnessed significant divisions within the top leadership of the NLD, but noted that the NLD Executive Committee remains unified behind ASSK.

¶4. (C) In addition to coordinating policy with the U.S., Brosseau stressed that the French recognized the important role of Asian countries as a means of influencing the government of Burma and cited the ASEAN countries, India, and Japan as key. He singled out India as having the potential to play a significant role, given its status as the world's largest democracy, but expressed concern that ASEAN's efficacy vis-a-vis the GOB may be limited due to divisions within the organization and continuing domestic turmoil in Thailand. While recognizing that China could play an important role, he shared the view that China has taken an inconsistent approach with the GOB.

RIVKIN